



BRANCHING OUT

NOVA SCOTIA
Department of Education - Public Schools Branch

At the bottom of the pages of this edition of **Branching Out**, we are reminded that February is African Heritage Month; March 8th is International Women's Day. What a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the recent passings of Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King, and as educators, pass on to our students their stories and a sense of how their compassion for others, commitment, ideals of racial equality, and their courage have had an impact on the lives of us all.

- Mike Sweeney, Senior Executive Director, Public Schools Branch

Social Studies 8

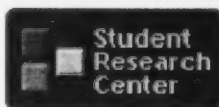
A new grade 8 social studies course will be introduced in September 2006. Lead teams from each school board will be invited to attend a provincial workshop scheduled for May 10-12, 2006. A student textbook entitled *Canadian Identity*, and teacher's resource will be provided in English and French to support implementation.

Students Gear up for Science Fairs

March is youth science month! Hundreds of junior and senior high school students will display their research and design achievements in the fields of biotechnology, computing and mathematical sciences, earth and environmental sciences, engineering life sciences, and physical sciences in regional science fairs across the province in March and April. With science fairs now active in each public school board, all students have access to this fun and educational opportunity.

This year, Mi'kmaq First Nation schools will be sending their first participants to the national fair. Nova Scotia Youth Experiences in Science will host the Team Nova Scotia Showcase, a team-building and media event for students competing in the national fair. It will take place April 27-29, 2006, at Dalhousie University.

The Canada-Wide Science Fair will be hosted in Truro in 2007.



EBSCO Introduces Student Research Center

<http://search.epnet.com>

EBSCO's interface has a new look designed for student researchers. As an alternative to the existing EBSCOhost interface, the Student Research Center provides students with easy, powerful access to high-quality information.

Through the Student Research Center, you can pre-select the type of content (Magazines, Newspapers, Biographies, Primary Source Documents, Images and Maps) to include with your search, or search by topic heading, use an online dictionary and encyclopedia, explore the top searches of the day, limit searches by reading level or get results limited to Canadian sources.

EBSCO is available to all schools in Nova Scotia. For more information, contact lrr@ednet.ns.ca.

Summer Institute—Cris Tovani / Tony Stead

Reality Checks—Yes, I Really Do Have to Teach Reading! will be held July 27-28 at Old Orchard Inn. This year's summer institute will feature international literacy theorists Tony Stead, author of *Reality Checks: Teaching Reading Comprehension with Non-Fiction K-5* and Cris Tovani author of *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading? Content Comprehension, Grades 6-12*. Tony Stead's workshop is intended for grades primary-5 teachers; Cris Tovani's workshop will be for grades 6-12 teachers. Maximum enrollment for each workshop will be 100. Register early!

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Education Quality Services (EQS) division added to Public Schools Branch

This new division is part of the Branch's strengthened focus on quality, standards and accountability and promoting stronger linkages, particularly related to systemic performance, support of Branch planning, policy and reporting activities.

The division co-ordinates *Learning for Life II* planning and reporting activities, supports Branch-wide information sharing, and coordinates Branch policy and standards activities. Susan Crandall, Director, is joined by Nancy Giles, Administrative Assistant. Until the end of the school year, Mitch Landry, from South Shore Regional School Board and Mike Brownlow, formerly of Halifax Regional School Board, are working with EQS. They are consulting with teachers, principals and school board staff about principal leadership and teacher growth planning (part of the *Raising the Bar* theme in *Learning for Life II: Brighter Futures Together*).

New Social Studies Software: Real Lives 2004

Real Lives 2004, a social studies software resource for grades 9–12, is now available through the ALR. Real Lives allows students to become immersed in the details of another life. They must make decisions based upon their particular circumstances which derive from United Nations data. This software is particularly appropriate for courses with a global perspective.

ArtReach

We are delighted to announce a new partnership between the Department of Education, English Program Services, and the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia that seeks to identify ways to develop exciting possibilities for school involvement in art gallery programs and exhibitions.

We're hoping to add to the Art Gallery's already existing outreach programs with traveling art collections and workshops for teachers and students across the province who find it difficult to visit AGNS, the development of on-line curriculum links between gallery works and school programs, free gallery tours and arts workshops for teachers, and an enrichment of classroom learning through the acquisition of art resources. Free gallery visits for educators (with ID presented at the front desk) are available at the end of each month. The first in a series of free art workshops

for educators will take place at AGNS, on Thursday, February 16 from 4:30 p.m.–6:30 p.m.

Our first joint project was the distribution of the Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World exhibition poster. We have begun to compile lesson plans linking this fascinating show to visual art, social studies, language arts, and other curriculum areas.

The first lessons are now available at <http://www.agns.gov.ns.ca> and <http://www.ednet.ns.ca>. The traveling Art Bank exhibition may be viewed at the Queen's County Museum in Liverpool: a great opportunity to view original prints from Canadian artists with your students.

Contact Willie Reid, ArtReach Coordinator, willie.reid@ns.sympatico.ca, or Dale Sheppard, Curator of Education, AGNS, sheppade@gov.ns.ca, for more information.



Arts Education is alive and well in schools across the province

We're working hard to make sure that all students have access to quality programs in arts education whether at the elementary, junior or senior high level.

- In September 2005, Implementation Drafts for Music 10 and Visual Arts 10 and supporting resources were sent to all high schools in the province.
- Several teachers will be piloting Music 12, Visual Arts 12 and Drama 12 this year. Teachers will select from a range of projects in each discipline to create dynamic learning experiences for their students.
- Advanced Music 11, Advanced Visual Arts 11, Advanced Music 12, and Advanced Visual Arts 12 are also being developed. Five pilot teachers are currently working with a number of students in each discipline to create learning experiences that go deeper into academic curriculum outcomes.
- At the elementary level, our lead teams have been travelling to boards by request to facilitate professional development sessions for teachers. To continue with our implementation strategy, we hope to distribute additional resources to support Music Primary–6 and Visual Arts Primary–6 this year.

Thanks to all the teachers and administrators who enthusiastically embrace the benefits of learning in, through, and about the arts! We welcome your feedback on current and future initiatives.



LifeWork Portfolio Coming to Schools in 2006-2007

Beginning in September 2006, students in Health/Personal Development and Relationships 7 will begin creating a LifeWork Portfolio, a purposeful selection of items which document a student's academic achievement, community service, involvement in extra-curricular activities and work experiences. Students can use the portfolio to reflect on their accomplishments, to identify their strengths and interests, and to plan paths to a career. With the help of a LifeWork Portfolio, students will choose courses with confidence, see a purpose for their studies, recognize their strengths and learning needs, and graduate with a clear and accurate vision of their next steps.

Students will be able to use technology to create a digital portfolio, and will be provided with safe, secure online storage to manage and present their portfolios. The LifeWork Portfolio initiative has a website which offers extensive support for both teachers and students at <http://lifework.ednet.ns.ca>

A summer institute will be offered to teachers, administrators, and guidance counsellors who wish to learn more about this exciting initiative and to be prepared for its implementation.

For further information, contact Peter Smith, Department Of Education Consultant for Youth Pathways and Transitions, at smithps@gov.ns.ca

New Website to Publish History of African Nova Scotia Communities

African Canadian Services is working with information technology supervisors and ACS11 teachers across the province during February and March on an exciting new endeavour: to create webpages that will publish student work about the history of local African Nova Scotian communities. This work is linked to the independent study unit of ACS11. For more information, contact Maureen Finlayson at African Canadian Services, finlaymm@gov.ns.ca

Provincial Examinations on Audio: Working Together for Students!

Evaluation Services (ES) is responsible for provincial examinations designed to monitor the core curriculum performance of public education in Nova Scotia. To make sure these exams are fair and appropriately challenging, ES maintains a thorough process for their development, field testing, administration and scoring. Twice a year, exams are proofread, printed and distributed to schools. Teachers who have requested adaptations for students with special needs, will receive the audio versions of exams produced by Learning Resources and Technology at the request of Evaluation Services. Demand for these audio versions continues to grow. This January, LRT produced 123 sets of English/Communications 12 CDs and 105 sets of English 12.

Your key to resources!

Use your EDnet user name and password to access resources and services from the Department of Education

•ImagesProject (imagesproject.ednet.ns.ca)
 •Webmail (staff.ednet.ns.ca) •Canadian History 11 Website (history11.ednet.ns.ca) •Cut-and-paste versions of some curriculum documents (educators.ednet.ns.ca) •LifeWork Portfolio (lifework.ednet.ns.ca) • Teacher Online Communities (www.ednet.ns.ca)

Province-wide School Improvement and Accreditation process now underway

Nova Scotia's public schools are starting the process of raising the bar on student achievement. The Department of Education's new School Improvement and Accreditation process is moving out of the pilot phase: 49 more schools will develop five-year plans to improve student achievement and school performance. Next year another 61 schools will begin the process, followed by 100 more in 2007-08. The program will expand to all 463 schools over the next five years.

This process will enable school communities to evaluate their strengths, identify their needs, and come up with a plan to improve student learning through SMART goals: Strategic and specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-based and Time-bound.

The first schools should receive their accreditation designation during the 2006-07 school year.

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And the winners are...

Thank you very much to those who responded to the Learning Resources and Technology User Survey. The valuable information will help us to better tailor our services to meet your needs. There were 2 winners in the draw: Sandi Garson from Kingswood Elementary School, Halifax Regional School Board won a 1 Gigabyte flash memory drive and Pam Nickerson from Drumlin Heights Consolidated/Plymouth Schools in Tri-County Regional School Board is the recipient of a Palm Z20 handheld.



Look for these resources at your school!

By the end of February, schools will receive the following resources:

Mathematics Assessment: A Practical Handbook for Grades K-3, Mathematics Assessment: A Practical Handbook for Grades 3-5, Mathematics Assessment: A Practical Handbook for Grades 6-8, and Mathematics Assessment: A Practical Handbook for Grades 9-12 (one per teacher).

Grades Primary-2

- Mathematics Grade Primary: A Teaching Resource,
 - Mathematics Grade 1: A Teaching Resource, and
 - Mathematics Grade 2: A Teaching Resource (one per teacher, English or Immersion Programs)
- These resources contain samples of yearly plans for single and combined grades, unit plans, literature connections, examples of language strategies to help develop the language of mathematics, and information on "Assessments for Learning" and "Assessments of

Learning". Appendices contain copies of all templates and worksheets for the developed activities

Grades Primary-6

- Mathematics: Home-School Communication box (**one box per school site**) provides teachers with resources to facilitate communication with parents or guardians of their students.
- Mathematics: Home Activity Packs (**one pack for each teacher in English or French Immersion programs, grades primary-3**) have been designed to complement classroom activities and the Atlantic Canada mathematics curriculum.
- Together Resource: Grades 3 and 4 (**Each teacher of a grades 3/4 combined classroom, English Program**) is designed to support teachers using the Math Makes Sense series in combined classrooms.

Grades 5-12

- Tessellation Exploration (provincial site licence) — The Department of Education has purchased a provincial licence for this software. Each school site will receive, via your school's computer technician, a disk that can be installed on unlimited computers at each site and additional support material.

Grade 7 Mathematics (English)

- Illustrated MATH Dictionary: An Essential Student Resource
- Nonfiction Writing Prompts for Math, Grades 7-9
- Teaching Reading in Mathematics, 2nd ed. These resources are intended to complement Active Readers and Writers in Action initiatives in the content areas and provide additional support to teachers in the effective implementation of mathematics in conjunction with these important literacy initiatives.

Public Schools Branch consists of the following Divisions:

African Canadian Services	902-424-3151	acsd@ednet.ns.ca	http://acs.ednet.ns.ca
English Program Services	902-424-8945	eps@ednet.ns.ca	http://eps.ednet.ns.ca
Education Quality Services	902-424-0040		
Evaluation Services	902-424-7746	testeval@ednet.ns.ca	http://plans.ednet.ns.ca
French Second Language Program Services	902-424-6646	fls@ednet.ns.ca	
Learning Resources and Technology	902-424-2462	lrt@ednet.ns.ca	http://lrt.ednet.ns.ca
Mikmaq Services	902-424-3428	msd@ednet.ns.ca	http://mikmaq-services.ednet.ns.ca
Student Services	902-424-7454	studentsvcs@ednet.ns.ca	
Senior Executive Director	902-424-5829		
Regional Education Offices	902-424-5799 (Halifax)	902-563-2080 (Sydney)	
	902-893-5890 (Truro)	902-742-3427 (Yarmouth)	

Nova Scotia Department of Education website: <http://ednet.ns.ca>

